



**MEETING SUMMARY
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
UPPER EAST COAST REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN (UECRWSP)
ISSUES WORKSHOP
South Florida Water Management District
City of Stuart – City Hall
121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart, Florida 34994
Friday, April 2, 2004**

Lennart Lindahl – Chairman of UECRWSP and SFWMD Governing Board Member was unable to attend.

Attendees:

WRAC Members:

Doug Bournique
Harry Cronin

Patrick Hayes

WRAC Alternates:

Thomas Bausch

Interested Parties:

Sam Amerson
Henry Camotto
Phil Fairbank
Jamie Furgang
Dick Galantowicz
Kathleen Higgins
John Holt
David Hoot

Don Hubbs
Julie Jennison
Steve Lamb
Joan Lawrence
Bruce McLeod
David McNabb
Brad Macek
Anne Murray

Mark Perry
Donna Smith
Richard Stenberg
Kevin Stinnette
Diana Waite

SFWMD Staff:

Jane Bucca
Scott Burns
Mark Elsner
John Mulliken

Beth Ross
Karen Smith
Keith Smith
Rick Smith

Curt Thompson
Pat Walker

1. Welcome and Introductions by John Mulliken, Acting Director, Water Supply Department, SFWMD. Meeting called to order at 9:15 a.m. The official Chairman, Len Lindahl, is out of state and unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Mulliken stated that this meeting would cover the draft Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan Planning Document (Plan) Update and solicit comments from all stakeholders. The SFWMD staff will work with all parties to review the draft and receive suggestions. This will be mailed to the Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

and their comments will be addressed. Comments must be submitted by April 12. The final Plan will be submitted on May 7, 2004. The draft Plan will be submitted to the full WRAC on April 8 and then to the Governing Board on April 14. In early May 2004, the comments will have been received from DEP and the final document will be ready in June 2004.

This is expected to be the last meeting on the Upper East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan. If another meeting is required, Mr. Elsner will schedule it in the near future.

2. Action Items from Previous Workshop by John Mulliken.

The Indian River Lagoon Project was signed into law by the Brigadier General for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) South Project Implementation Report (PIR). This will be the first CERP project to make it Congress for approval.

All attendees introduced themselves and stated their affiliation.

3. Overview of Process for Plan Update, Mark Elsner, Lead Engineer, Water Supply Department, SFWMD.

Mr. Elsner provided information on the planning process and informed the stakeholders of upcoming dates for activities concerning the draft Plan.

Staff has been visiting local governmental agencies to brief the officials on the Plan, and several local agencies have been participating in the development.

4. Approval Process for Plan, by Beth Ross, Sr. Specialist Attorney, Office of Counsel.

A draft Final Order on Upper East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan that will be presented to the SFWMD Governing Board in June was distributed to stakeholders. Information on the Order was provided.

5. Discuss Draft 2004 UECWSP Planning Document Chapter 5 (Meeting and Managing Future Water Demands), by Mark Elsner

Mr. Elsner said this document will be common to all four of the regional water supply Plans of South Florida Water Management District. He reviewed the appendices in the Plan.

Comments are requested as this is a Plan for all interested parties. This should reflect both the input and strategies of the public and the purpose of this forum is to get comments in order to make the Plan better. This will guide the District for the next five years.

A review of the Plan will be completed today.

Executive Summary:

Comments on the “projected water demands”, environmental water supply, and a suggestion to add wording that speaks to the environmental needs. It is very difficult to define environmental needs, and the Plan is already addressing several of the environmental issues. Information on reservations of water and water for the environment that is beneficial to the system is important to have in the document. Several stakeholders agreed that something needs to be written in the Plan concerning quantification of the water that needs to be kept alive in the system. A minimum flow is established for portions of the St. Lucie, Loxahatchee, and Indian River Lagoon to manage the water.

Discussion and comments regarding members of tether agricultural industry leaving the area and the fact that there may be “too much water” in the future, due to deep and shallow water habitats. As agricultural requirements shrink, the demand for water will shrink. The figures provided a year ago are too high due to rapidly changing circumstances. An accurate estimate of water demands needs to be in the Plan. Information on the agricultural industry and the problems in the Treasure Coast area due to the immense growth was provided.

Positive comments from a stakeholder on the draft Plan, and the good information in the document. This document addresses the environmental concerns as well as the agricultural concerns.

6. Discussion of Chapter 6 (Recommendations) By Mark Elsner.

Mr. Elsner presented information on the eight water source options:

- Aquifer Storage & Recovery
- Conservation
- Floridan Aquifer
- Reclaimed Water
- Reservoir
- Seawater
- Surface Water
- Surficial Aquifer

A chart (Table 21) demonstrating the potential of water source options in meeting the 2025 Upper East Coast Water Supply needs was explained. Stakeholder comments on Florida Power & Light and the sources for future water demands. Information on the use of surface water, environmental needs, and other topics was provided. Discussion on the surficial aquifer system and enhancement of withdrawals was held by staff and stakeholders. The freshwater needs of the estuarine systems on aquifer storage and recovery were discussed and a change from “H” = High to “M” = Medium or “L” = Low was requested. Further information and discussion on reclaimed water and aquifer storage and recovery.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery: This section will be modified. The use of reclaimed water and which layer of the aquifer it goes into was discussed. This would have to be a geographical determination. On Page 110, Recommendation A1 will be revised. Questions on Table 22 is an estimate of schedule and costs for promoting reclaimed water ASR and the number of FTEs needed.

Conservation: Recommendation C2 concerning Rulemaking will be revised. Conservation is very important to the SFWMD and they are willing to cost share on projects up to 50/50. Recommendation C3 on Continue Water Savings Incentive Funding Program does not concern ASR. It is challenging to determine what dollar amounts should be allocated as an incentive on funding to facilitate implementation of cost-effective retrofits.

Florida Aquifer System: A better understanding needs to be done on water and it was emphasized that continuing education is important.

Statement read into the record by Richard Stenberg, representing Ft. Pierce Utilities Authority:

The SFWMD is in the final stages of the draft of the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan Planning document.

Chapter 6 deals with recommendations. A part of this chapter deals with the Floridan Aquifer and how we all should proceed into the future. It is SFWMD's understanding that water utilities will be relying on their future water supply by tapping into the Floridan and not increasing their present day usage of the surficial aquifer.

Although SFWMD acknowledges that a lot more study is needed, with respect to future quantity and quality issues, they propose a "Band-Aid" approach when it comes to one of the most cost effective methods for ensuring that adequate Floridan water will be available while at the same time stopping the leakage of chloride laden waters into the surficial aquifer.

Recommendation F5 calls for refining the Floridan well inventory. A good idea! However, zero dollars are proposed to be budgeted for F5 and the quantity of water that will be made available is also projected at zero!

Meanwhile (i.e., right now), potentially millions of gallons per day are flowing freely to the surface to be lost and or pollute (chlorides) the surficial aquifer.

SFWMD goes on to recommend that individual landowners should decommission Floridan wells that are not active and recommends that the citrus industry pursue a state appropriation for funding the decommissioning.

It seems to me, and I hope you agree, that the District needs to step up to the plate and take on the responsibility that it was intended for (i.e., manage the water). Put some money up, immediately, for the Inventorying and decommissioning of these wells. There may be hundreds (I don't think anyone knows for sure) of these wells leaking into or flowing directly onto the surface of the ground. Not dealing immediately with this potentially large problem endangers the future supply, both surficial and Floridan, of the public in the Upper East Coast.

The district needs to clarify this issue!

Stakeholder commended staff on the Plan; however, F5 to *Refine Floridan well inventory and increase public awareness of presence of Floridan wells when land is converted to urban development*, does fall short on refining Floridan well inventory. Since no money is funded for this, landowners must pay for abandoned wells. Without funding there can be no well abandonment program. Agreement by another stakeholder. Suggestion to partner with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to obtain funding. Recommendation F4 to *Conduct Floridan Aquifer tracer tests to better understand flow paths in Floridan Aquifer* was discussed by another stakeholder. Mr. Mulliken addressed the types of programs that are being considered by the District. The landowner has an obligation to take care of their property. An incentive type program needs to be discussed between the District and stakeholders. Scott Burns, Division Director, Water Use Regulation, SFWMD, said the District does have a program on plugging abandoned wells and provided background information on the program; including the fact that the District requires abandoned wells to be plugged. Establishing an inventory of abandoned wells should be the first step. Continuing discussion on the policies of the District on well abandonment and the current policy could be re-considered by the District Governing Board. Mr. Mulliken will address the question of abandoned wells, and the cost of the District providing incentive money for plugging, with the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) at the April 8, 2004 meeting. He will report back to the group if additional language is added to the Plan. Stakeholder commented that an inventory would not be useful because landowners will not provide an inventory of their abandoned wells due to the cost required to plug the well. District staff said an "issues team" is the key to obtaining funding. Other attendees provided information on funding.

Rewording of Recommendation F5 was suggested to add "... *work toward decommission of wells that may have an impact on the Floridan aquifer ...*"

Reclaimed Water: Mr. Elsner reviewed this section. Recommendations were read and comments requested.

Stakeholder comments on issuance of permits for water use and there is a need for better coordination with utility companies. Staff said that all District permits require applicants to look at the option to use reclaimed water. Discussions held on utility company's requirements on reuse/reclaimed water. Mandatory Reuse Zones were discussed.

Scott Burns explained the Regulatory Program at the District.

Reservoirs: There are no specific recommendations on Reservoirs.

Wording on sentence concerning incorporate water conservation and water supply considerations on page 126. Change the work "could" to "should".

Seawater: This is a good option, but other options are better in this area. No recommendations in this section.

Surface Water: Mr. Elsner provided information on the options. Recommendations were reviewed.

Recommendations on S3 – *Develop a Restoration Plan for the Loxahatchee River*; and S4 – *Establish initial reservation for Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River* were requested. Wording needs to be added on restoration of areas and establishing reservations. At the current time, no funding is available for development of a restoration Plan for the Loxahatchee River, but it is undergoing the budget process at the District. Patricia Walker, Lead Planner, Coastal Ecosystems Division, provided information on the current restoration efforts.

The new Scripps facility that is proposed for northern Palm Beach County and Martin/St. Lucie Counties was of concern to stakeholders. A recommendation to support local governments' initiatives and work both with private companies and the District is included in the Plan. General discussion. Request for the District to add language providing their commitment to environmental resource permitting, even if no funding is available.

Recommendation S6: Suggestion to add wording on MFLs in the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee that establishes the amount of the MFLs.

Recommendation S9: Comment from stakeholder that this is very beneficial to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River and moving the water north/south will benefit the area. The cost of the study and the combination with the Indian River Lagoon study was discussed.

Administrative Matter: It was agreed by the group to finish the review of Chapter 6. Meeting will then adjourn. Agreement that written comments on any section of the Plan from stakeholders will be sent to Mark Elsner.

Surficial Aquifer System (SAS): Reviewed and no changes made.

Related Strategies: Reviewed and discussion on alternative water supply and regional water supply Planning. The surplus in freshwater and the affect on the aquifers was discussed. When CERP is completed, there will be a lot of excess water and Planning should be done to determine where the water will be sent.

Mr. Elsner reported that the summary showed that with CERP there are 26 recommendations and \$575 million and about 85 FTEs. He thanked everyone for their attendance at the last seven (7) meetings on this issue. He urged further comments and said they must be submitted by May 7, 2004.

7. Discuss Draft 2004 UECWSP Planning Document Chapters 1 – 4, by Mark Elsner. Deferred. Stakeholders will send in comments.

8. Discuss Draft 2004 UECWSP Support Document & Appendices, by David Gilpin-Hudson, Lead Planner, SFWMD. Deferred. Stakeholders will send in comments.

9. Public Comment. None.

10. Workshop Wrap Up Items. None.

Adjournment at 12:15 p.m.

Lennart Lindahl
Chairman – UECRWSP

Paula Moree
District Deputy Clerk